AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently amended) An image receiving element comprising a microporous film made by the method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a first polymer which is a hydrophobic thermoplastic polymer and a second polymer which is a hydrophilic polymer or copolymer of N-vinylpyrrolidone;

(b) dissolving ~~said~~ the first and second polymers in a solvent system which is compatible with both polymers, ~~said~~ the solvent system comprising a blend of an aprotic organic solvent and an alcohol;

(c) coating the resulting solution on a support;

(d) effecting at least a partial drying of the resulting coating; and

(e) washing the coating in an aqueous medium so as to extract at least 50% by weight of the ~~said~~ second polymer.

12. (Currently amended) An ink accepting member comprising a support which is a sheet-form microporous material which on a coating-free, printing ink-free and impregnant-free basis comprises:

(a) a matrix consisting essentially of substantially water-insoluble thermoplastic organic polymer,

(b) finely divided substantially water-insoluble filler particles, of which at least 50% by weight are siliceous particles, the filler particles being distributed throughout the matrix and constituting from 40 to 90% by weight of the microporous material, and

(c) a network of interconnecting pores communicating substantially throughout the microporous material, the pores constituting from 35 to 95% by volume of the microporous ~~material,~~ material;

~~said~~ wherein the support ~~bearing~~ bears on at least one side thereof a microporous organic polymer film comprising a network of pores which communicate with the pores in ~~said~~ the

support; wherein the microporous organic polymer film comprises a hydrophobic thermoplastic polymer.

13. (Currently amended) The ink accepting member of claim 12 wherein ~~said~~ the microporous organic polymer film has a thickness in the range 5 to 100 μm and has a porosity in the range 30 to 80% by volume.

14. (Currently amended) The ink accepting member of claim 12 wherein ~~said~~ the microporous organic polymer film comprises 10^4-10^7 pores/mm^2 with an average pore size in the range 0.2-2.0 μm.

15. (Currently amended) The ink accepting member of claim 12 wherein ~~said~~ the microporous organic polymer film comprises a polymer selected from the ~~list~~ group consisting of poly(methyl methacrylate), cellulose acetate butyrate, poly(vinyl acetal)s and vinyl chloride/vinyl acetate copolymers, and mixtures thereof.

16. (Currently amended) The ink accepting member of claim 12 wherein ~~said~~ the support bears on both sides thereof a microporous organic polymer film comprising a network of pores which communicate with the pores in ~~said~~ the support.

17. (Currently amended) The ink accepting member of claim 12 wherein ~~said~~ the support is adhered to an auxiliary support.

18. – 24. (Cancelled)

25. (New) The image receiving element of claim 11 comprising the microporous film on a desired substrate, wherein the support is a temporary carrier, and wherein the method further comprises the steps of:

laminating the resulting coating to the substrate; and

peeling away the temporary carrier;

prior to the step of washing the coating in the aqueous medium.

26. (New) The image receiving element of claim 11 wherein the hydrophobic thermoplastic polymer comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of poly(methyl methacrylate), cellulose acetate butyrate, poly(vinyl acetal)s and vinyl chloride/vinyl acetate copolymers, and mixtures thereof.

27. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 12 wherein the hydrophobic thermoplastic polymer comprises a polymer having pendant hydroxyl groups.

28. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 27 wherein the hydrophobic thermoplastic polymer is characterized by a hydroxyl number not less than 300.

29. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 27 wherein the hydrophobic thermoplastic polymer is characterized by a hydroxyl number not less than 350.

30. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 27 wherein the hydrophobic thermoplastic polymer is characterized by a hydroxyl number less than 1000.

31. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 27 wherein the hydrophobic thermoplastic polymer is a cellulose acetate butyrate comprising an average of 0.2 to 0.5 unreacted hydroxyl groups per repeating unit.

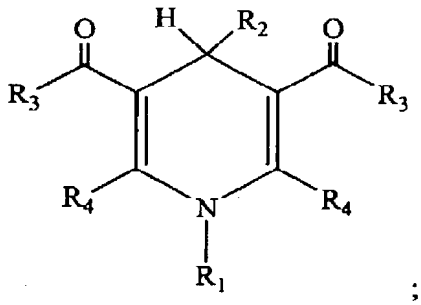
32. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 12 wherein the hydrophobic thermoplastic polymer is a poly(vinyl butyral) comprising approximately 12% unreacted poly(vinyl alcohol).

33. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 12 wherein the microporous organic polymer film further comprises a hardener or crosslinking agent.

34. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 33 wherein the crosslinking agent is a polyfunctional isocyanate.

35. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 33 wherein the hardener is an additive capable of physical crosslinking or hardening of the microporous organic polymer film.

36. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 33 wherein the hardener is a compound having the structure:

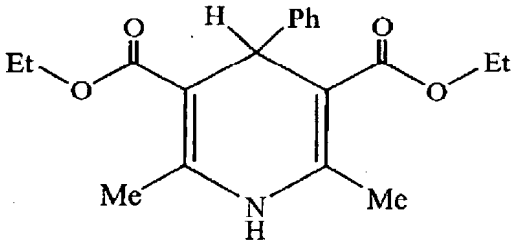


;

wherein R^1 represents hydrogen, an alkyl group, a cycloalkyl group, or an aryl group;
R^2 represents an alkyl group, a cycloalkyl group, or an aryl group;
each R^3 represents an alkyl group or an alkoxy group; and
each R^4 represents hydrogen, an alkyl group, or an aryl group.

37. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 36 wherein:
R^1 represents hydrogen;
R^2 represents an aryl group;
each R^3 represents an alkyl or alkoxy group of up to 5 carbon atoms; and
each R^4 represents an alkyl group of up to 5 carbon atoms.

38. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 33 wherein the hardener is a compound having the structure:



39. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 12 wherein the microporous organic polymer film comprises one or more additives selected from the group consisting of surfactants, levelling agents, UV absorbers, antioxidants, free radical scavengers, and mordants.

40. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 12 wherein the microporous organic polymer film comprises a silicone-based or fluorocarbon-based levelling agent.

41. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 12 wherein the microporous organic polymer film comprises a particulate filler.

42. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 41 wherein the particulate filler is a silica-based filler.

43. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 41 wherein the particulate filler comprises fumed silica, precipitated silica, calcium silicate, or a mixture thereof.

44. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 41 wherein the particulate filler is characterized by an average particle size of less than 1.0 μm.

45. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 41 wherein the particulate filler is characterized by an average particle size of less than 0.5 μm.

46. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 41 wherein the particulate filler is characterized by an average particle size of less than 0.1 μm.

47. (New) The ink accepting member of claim 41 wherein the microporous organic polymer film contains 5 to 40 parts particulate filler per 100 parts hydrophobic thermoplastic polymer, by weight.

48. (New) An imaging method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a first polymer which is a hydrophobic thermoplastic polymer and a second polymer which is a hydrophilic polymer or copolymer of N-vinylpyrrolidone;

(b) dissolving the first and second polymers in a solvent system which is compatible with both polymers, the solvent system comprising a blend of an aprotic organic solvent and an alcohol;

(c) coating the resulting solution on a support;

(d) effecting at least a partial drying of the resulting coating;

(e) washing the coating in an aqueous medium so as to extract at least 50% by weight of the second polymer, to yield a microporous film;

(f) imagewise depositing an ink comprising a colorant in a carrier fluid onto the microporous film; and

(g) heating the microporous film to seal the image.

49. (New) The imaging method of claim 48 wherein the ink is a water-based ink.

50. (New) The imaging method of claim 48 wherein the ink is deposited by ink jet printing.

51. (New) The imaging method of claim 48 wherein the step of heating includes heating the microporous film to about 60° C or higher.

52. (New) The imaging method of claim 48 wherein the sealed image is capable of surviving immersion in water.